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OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL PROPERTY

INVESTING IN SCHOOLS

Durham County ranks first in North Carolina in the value of public school property per inhabitant in 1923, the average being \$40.08. Clay county comes last with a per inhabitant investment in public school property of only \$4.88, or about one-tenth, the investment per inhabitant in Durham County. The rank of the counties of North Carolina in the per inhabitant value of school property is shown in an accompanying table. The table is derived by dividing the value of all public school property in each county as reported from the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction by the population as estimated by the Bureau of the Census, both for the year 1923.

Buncombe leads all the counties of the state in the total value of school property with an investment of \$2,486,000 and ranks second to Durham in the value of school property per inhabitant. Clay county comes last, not only in the per inhabitant value, but in the total value of school property. Her 16 school houses are valued at \$21,500, or an average value of \$1,344.

The total value of all public school property in North Carolina in 1923 was approximately 47 million dollars, or a per inhabitant investment of \$17.50. Thirty-seven counties rank above the state average, while 63 counties are below the state average. In 21 counties, mainly in the mountain and tide-water areas, the investment in school property averages from four to ten dollars per inhabitant.

School Property and Wealth

As a general rule the per inhabitant value of school property bears a close relationship to the per inhabitant taxable wealth. For instance, Durham ranks first both in taxable wealth and in school property on a per inhabitant basis, while Clay ranks 97th in taxable wealth and 100th in school property.

However, there are a few praiseworthy as well as discreditable exceptions. A few counties rank high in wealth but low in willingness to build school houses, if we are to judge by the value of property as reported for 1923. See News Letter Vol. X, No. 22 for Taxable Wealth Per Inhabitant. On the other hand a few counties which are all poor in purse seem abundantly willing to do their best in the way of providing buildings for their children. A few such counties are: Currituck, Pamlico, Washington, Avery, Transylvania, Rockingham, Warren and others less noteworthy. Local leadership usually explains the rank of such counties.

Nor is it possible to say that the high or low ranking counties are to be found in any particular area. Counties with large investments in school property are side by side with counties equally as wealthy but with very little school property. However, the bulk of the counties that rank highest are the industrial and urban counties of the Piedmont area, and coming first below these are the combination cotton and tobacco counties centering about Wilson. Some notable exceptions to the latter group are Franklin, Sampson, Lenoir, and Edgecombe, all of which rank low in school property.

Rural and Urban

It is a well-known fact that the educational advantages of the country children of North Carolina are far below those of urban children. The city children have a longer school term, superior teachers, and much better equipment. More than three-fourths of all the children enrolled in school in North Carolina are enrolled in schools classed as rural, and less than one-fourth are enrolled in urban schools. The 47 million dollars worth of school property in the state is almost exactly equally divided between urban and rural. This means that on the average urban child more than twice as much is spent on buildings and equipment as on the average country child.

Johnston county, for instance is a great agricultural county and a large majority of the school children are enrolled in rural schools. Yet in 1923 the urban schools of Clayton, Selma, and

Smithfield were valued at \$561,785, while the 121 rural schools were valued at \$400,000.

The 99 rural schools of Gaston county are valued at \$80,000, while the city schools of Gastonia, Cherryville, and Bessemer City are valued at \$509,000.

In Forsyth county one-half of the children are enrolled in rural schools, yet the 98 rural schools were valued at only \$290,000, while the schools of Winston-Salem and Kernersville were valued at \$1,727,000, or six times as much per child enrolled in school. And so it runs for the entire state. North Carolina is primarily an agricultural state, but the school houses that are used by country children do not compare favorably with the buildings that house urban children. A few rural counties have done remarkably well, but many others have failed to provide school buildings and equipment commensurate with their wealth. The ten million dollar loan fund for buildings provided by the legislatures of 1921 and 1923 is the greatest step yet taken to enable the country children to have better school houses, especially the country children in the poorer counties. This loan fund should be greatly enlarged by the next assembly.

ASTOUNDING GROWTH

It is to be doubted whether any state in the Union of anything like the wealth and population of North Carolina can duplicate her story of public school property increases during the last two decades. In 1900 when the new day in Carolina was just beginning to dawn all her public school property was valued at around one million dollars, or less than fifty cents per inhabitant. In 1904 it was reported at \$1,908,675; in 1910 the value of school property was reported to be \$5,863,000; in 1915 at \$10,434,000; in 1919 at \$16,295,000; and in 1923 the total value of all school property was reported to be approximately 47 million dollars! It is much larger today, for during the last year North Carolina has been spending more on school buildings than ever before in her history, due mainly to the loans made by the state to the consolidated rural community schools.

Forty-seven times as much school property in the state in 1923 as in 1900—an increase of forty-six hundred percent in 23 years! That is a record that any state might well be proud of. And yet 1924 will throw the 1923 record into the shade.

It is interesting to note that since 1919 the value of school property has increased from \$16,295,000 to \$47,000,000, or an increase of nearly 200 percent in four years. The value of school property increased twice as much in the four years following 1919 as in the 19 preceding years!

There are ten counties in North Carolina, any one of which had a larger total investment in school property in 1923 than the entire state had in 1900. Buncombe county alone had two and a half times as much school property in 1923 as the state had in 1900! Mecklenburg and Forsyth each had more than twice as much, and Durham had almost twice as much. There are nine other counties, either of which in 1923 could almost match the total value of state school property in 1900.

The ten counties of the state each of which had more than a million dollars worth of school property in 1923 are in order: Buncombe, Mecklenburg, Forsyth, Guilford, Durham, Wake, Wilson, Iredell, Rockingham, and New Hanover.

Gratifying as has been our recent progress in the erection of new and up-to-date school buildings, we are far from being able to point with pride to large areas of the state. The bulk of our school property is in the cities, and in towns whose schools are classed as rural. For the most part the rural school buildings are still of the one and two room type, and of very little property value. Some town children and a large majority of our country children are still housed in small and ill-equipped school buildings that soon must go to make room for large centrally located community schools under the county unit of administration. This is the solution of the rural school problem of

MY COMMUNITY

My community is the place where my home is founded, where my children are educated, where my income is earned, where my friends dwell, and where my life is chiefly lived. I have chosen it, after due consideration, from among all the places on earth. It is the home spot for me. Here let me live until death claims me. Then let my neighbors say I was a friend to man.—Cotton Grower

the state.

Instead of a new school building every day in North Carolina, we ought to tear down at least five houses of the one and two room type and erect in their stead real community school buildings, properly equipped and properly staffed with good teachers.

North Carolina is not likely to go broke building school houses. While every citizen is proud of our recent achievements in the erection of buildings we must not lose sight of the fact that our present investment is not large when we consider our population, our wealth, and our place in the column of states.

There are three counties in the state, each of which has more than three times as much wealth on the tax books as all the school houses of North Carolina are now valued at. The value of all school property in the state amounts to only 1.7 percent of the aggregate of property listed for taxation, and to only one percent of the estimated true value of the principal forms of wealth in the state as reported by the Federal Department of Commerce.

In conclusion let us remember in considering the investment in public school buildings and equipment in the counties and towns of North Carolina that the state does not build public school houses. Public schools are built by local communities, and they are built in largest numbers and involve largest expenditures of money in those counties and communities that have largest community pride, greatest tax willingness, and most constructive local leadership.—S. H. H., Jr.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

There should always be a spirit of co-operation and friendship between town and country dwellers. Time was (and not so very long ago) when there was a great gulf fixed between the two, and it was taken for granted that what appeared to be in the interest of one was per se inimical to the best interest of the other. Although this feeling is not so strong as it was it still prevails to too great an extent.

So far as fundamental economic principles are concerned, all the people are inter-dependent, and, therefore, what affects the people of the towns and cities affects to a greater or less extent the people of the rural districts. If the producers of cotton, tobacco, truck and fruit do not prosper on account of certain adverse conditions neither will the business men of the towns and cities prosper, that is, they will not permanently prosper. If the business methods of the city and town men work permanently against the men of the rural districts, those business methods will in the end rebound to the hurt of the cities and towns, because the fountain head is the all important part of the stream and must be fed to give a healthy flow. But the only way in which a fountain head of a stream can get a healthy outlet is through good conditions for its passage to the sea. In other words, if there is to be permanent prosperity in a community, county or state there must be co-operation between town and country.

Let there be co-operation between town and country, and the best starting point would be in the maintenance of good roads and schools, such as we have in this county and state. Town and country dwellers are benefited alike by good roads and good schools, and in accordance with the fixed laws of trade all the resultant good effects of agricultural and business prosperity, both of which are promoted by good roads and good schools.—Sanford Express.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANCE

The Wilkes Journal gives parallel columns showing educational advance of twenty years in Wilkes county. A few outstanding items are interesting and informing. In 1903 the value of school property was \$11,220; in 1923 it was \$349,250. In 1903 the annual school fund was \$14,358; 1923 it was \$233,334. Twenty years ago there were eight school libraries; last year there were 148 in addition to 289 supplemental libraries. In 1903 there were no pupils studying agriculture while last year there were 678 studying this fundamental branch of learning. The average daily attendance on enrollment in 1903 was 65 percent; last year it was 91 percent. Wilkes educational affairs under the aggressive leadership of C. C. Wright make an uncommonly good showing, but what has been done in Wilkes has been done, broadly speaking, all over the state. Great headway has been made. But much remains to be done. The length of school term in Wilkes advanced in twenty years only from 13 to 24 weeks. Longer school terms for the rural districts with further improvement in teaching force and equipment are necessary.—News and Observer.

HOME OWNERSHIP

A man who has spent most of his life in social service work recently said that he had practically reached the conclusion that the most effective way of attacking modern problems

would be to inaugurate a permanent, nation-wide campaign for home ownership.

His idea is that the source of most of our present day trouble is the lack of family stability.

The home owner does not desert his wife and children.

He does not suffer from wanderlust. He takes a strong interest in his community.

The purchase of his own home arouses his ambition, his thrift and his industry.

Being permanently located, he is a better husband, a better father, a better citizen, and a better worker.

The more you think about this matter, the more you will be convinced that it is fundamental.—Statesville Landmark.

BEAUTIFYING THE CITY

A step in civic progress and beauty was made by the Cherryville chamber of commerce in the purchase and delivery of 200 cherry trees. A committee of four was immediately appointed to begin setting them out on the four main highways approaching the city.

Each man of the committee will be responsible for the planting, cultivation and upkeep of the trees for the beautification of the roads and the luscious fruit that may be had for the picking in three or four years. These trees will have an added significance in that they will be fitting symbols to strangers of the town Cherryville.—Lexington Dispatch.

INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOL PROPERTY

Per Inhabitant in North Carolina in 1923

In the following table the counties are ranked according to the per inhabitant value of all public school property in 1923. The table is based (1) on the value of school property as reported from the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and (2) on the Bureau of the Census estimate of population, both for the year 1923.

Durham ranks first in the value of school property per inhabitant, the amount being \$40.08. Buncombe ranks first in the total value of school property \$2,486,000, and second in value per inhabitant. Clay ranks last both in the total value of school property \$21,500, and in value per inhabitant \$4.88.

State total value of public school property approximately 47 million dollars, and the investment per inhabitant is \$17.50.

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Rank	County	School Property Per Inhab.	Rank	County	School Property Per Inhab.
1	Durham	\$40.08	51	Macon	\$14.52
2	Buncombe	35.88	52	Camden	14.31
3	Pasquotank	35.50	53	Cabarrus	13.86
4	Washington	33.22	54	Alleghany	13.58
5	Wilson	33.00	55	Graham	13.30
6	McDowell	31.95	56	Bertie	13.25
7	Scotland	31.55	57	Anson	13.06
8	Iredell	30.83	58	Hertford	12.97
9	Montgomery	29.28	59	Martin	12.89
10	Pamlico	29.18	60	Jackson	12.55
11	Carteret	28.00	61	Cleveland	12.50
12	Rockingham	24.38	62	Randolph	12.41
13	New Hanover	24.04	63	Gaston	12.26
14	Mecklenburg	24.00	64	Northampton	12.21
15	Transylvania	23.55	65	Burke	12.13
16	Davidson	23.20	66	Columbus	12.12
17	Craven	23.10	67	Haywood	11.61
18	Forsyth	22.90	68	Davie	11.52
19	Guilford	22.07	69	Lee	11.51
20	Alamance	22.00	70	Alexander	11.48
21	Cumberland	21.03	71	Cherokee	11.26
22	Nash	20.95	72	Person	11.17
23	Currituck	20.64	73	Chatham	11.13
24	Granville	20.45	74	Beaufort	11.12
25	Rutherford	20.44	75	Wilkes	11.11
26	Caldwell	20.30	76	Edgecombe	10.84
27	Halifax	20.18	77	Hoke	10.68
28	Harnett	19.64	78	Madison	10.11
29	Duplin	19.55	79	Gates	10.05
30	Lincoln	19.06	80	Richmond	9.61
31	Orange	18.86	81	Onslow	9.57
32	Johnston	18.50	82	Sampson	9.56
33	Warren	18.20	83	Watauga	9.50
34	Chowan	18.12	84	Perquimans	9.05
35	Vance	18.05	85	Surry	8.88
36	Stanly	18.02	86	Caswell	8.84
37	Wayne	17.80	87	Polk	8.36
38	Rowan	17.20	88	Ashe	8.30
39	Jones	16.90	89	Hyde	8.24
40	Avery	16.83	90	Yancey	7.78
41	Wake	16.76	91	Stokes	7.41
42	Greene	16.60	92	Swain	7.34
43	Union	16.02	93	Franklin	7.30
44	Bladen	15.76	94	Dare	7.10
45	Robeson	15.50	95	Lenoir	6.86
46	Catawba	15.43	96	Brunswick	6.72
47	Moore	15.33	97	Mitchell	6.68
48	Pitt	15.05	98	Pender	5.62
49	Henderson	14.78	99	Yadkin	5.47
50	Tyrrell	14.63	100	Clay	4.88